

14 August 2004

NE NPR-A Planning Team
Bureau of Land Management, Alaska State Office
222 West 7th Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99513-7599

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Dear Team:

We strongly urge you to adopt Alternative A (No Action Alternative) for the following reasons:

1

— 87% of the northeast area of the NPR is already open to oil and gas development.

002
Alternatives

— The entire Teshekpuk Lake Surface Protection Area should remain closed to drilling as in the current leasing plan to protect the remarkable wildlife habitat it encompasses. The wetlands, sedge meadows, and waters of the Teshekpuk Lake area are necessary for tens of thousands of molting geese of many species who are flightless and vulnerable in that condition. The area is also used by other wildlife including 45,000 caribou. BLM's Preferred Alternative would reduce protection of Teshekpuk by 75%. It would eliminate nearly all the current wildlife protections and allow permanent gravel roads for exploration as well as construction activities that would infringe on sensitive buffer zones.

003
Planning

— Congress in 1976 mandated "maximum protection" for "fish and wildlife and other surface values" during petroleum exploration of the Reserve.

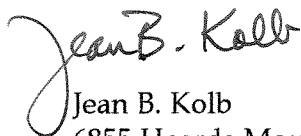
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— The National Academy of Sciences report (March 2003) found that oil and gas development elsewhere on the North Slope has not been environmentally benign — as supporters of oil extraction would have us believe. Development for oil has had detrimental effects on water and air quality, wildlife, and the lives of native people.

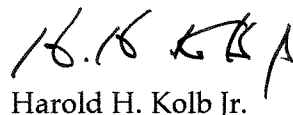
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— It is morally reprehensible for BLM to open more of the habitat of Alaskan wildlife to the environmental degradation that goes with oil and gas exploration and development when 1) our current Congress will not raise CAFE standards on motor vehicles to a level that will genuinely slow consumption of limited oil resources, and 2) the automobile industry continues to make, and Americans continue to buy, gas-guzzling vehicles. At some point, the United States government — which includes BLM — must push the American public to change our wasteful habits, not just accommodate them. Adopting the No-Action Alternative would protect wildlife, and it would also send a message about where our responsibilities lie.

Sincerely,



Jean B. Kolb
6855 Heards Mountain Road
Covesville, Virginia 22931



Harold H. Kolb Jr.